
HOUSE BILL 1249

State of Washington

57th Legislature

2001 Regular Session

By Representatives Kagi, Boldt, Ballasiotes, Tokuda, Dickerson, Gombosky, Darneille, Morell, Anderson, Schual-Berke, Esser, McIntire, Doumit, Kenney, Clements, Edwards, Fromhold, Miloscia, Barlean, Talcott, Ruderman, Conway, Kessler, Ogden, Lovick, D. Schmidt, O'Brien, Edmonds, Wood and Haigh

Read first time 01/22/2001. Referred to Committee on Children & Family Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to the quality of foster care services; amending
2 RCW 74.13.270; adding new sections to chapter 74.13 RCW; and
3 recodifying RCW 74.13.290, 74.14A.050, 74.13.320, 74.13.325,
4 74.14B.020, 74.13.250, 74.13.310, 74.13.260, 74.13.280, 74.13.285,
5 74.13.300, 74.13.330, 74.13.270, 74.13.315, 74.13.335, 74.13.340, and
6 74.14B.080.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 74.13 RCW,
9 to be codified after RCW 74.13.230 under the subchapter heading "Foster
10 Care", to read as follows:

11 The legislature finds that children and youth in foster care
12 deserve to be provided with a safe, secure, and stable home along with
13 the compassion and nurture of a foster family. The legislature
14 recognizes that foster families open their homes and hearts to children
15 whose families are in crisis, play a vital role in helping children and
16 families heal and reconnect, and in launching children into successful
17 adulthood.

18 Children in foster care deserve to be in homes that meet high
19 quality standards that are assured through accountability. It is the

1 intent of the legislature that children in foster care are supported in
2 homes that meet their needs, and that foster parents are supported.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 74.13 RCW,
4 to be codified after RCW 74.13.010, to read as follows:

5 The legislature finds that accreditation by an independent entity
6 improves the quality of services provided to children and families.
7 Accreditation demonstrates an ongoing commitment to nationally
8 recognized standards of best practice in child welfare and provides
9 accountability for achieving outcome goals. Accreditation provides
10 assurance that the organization delivers effective services that meet
11 community needs.

12 Accreditation is a structured process designed to facilitate
13 organizational change and improvement. Accreditation means persons
14 served can expect greater participation in decisions that affect their
15 cases, improved case management and documentation, and improved
16 internal operations and accountability. Accreditation improves
17 relationships with biological parents, foster and adoptive parents,
18 providers, the courts, and members of the community.

19 The accreditation process promotes organizational improvement
20 through the application of several strategies, including but not
21 limited to:

- 22 (1) Appropriate caseworker ratios;
- 23 (2) Aggressive recruitment and retention of foster parents;
- 24 (3) Improved responsiveness to foster parents;
- 25 (4) Provision of appropriate reunification services to birth
26 families;
- 27 (5) Development of positive outcome goals and compliance with
28 customer service standards; and
- 29 (6) Establishing the principle that all parts of the services
30 system will respond consistently, positively, and timely.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 74.13 RCW,
32 to be codified after section 2 of this act, to read as follows:

33 In recognition of the value of accreditation in improving the child
34 welfare services system, the legislature supports the department's
35 efforts to seek full accreditation of all children's administration
36 offices and establishes a goal of achieving accreditation by an
37 independent entity by July 1, 2006.

1 **Sec. 4.** RCW 74.13.270 and 1990 c 284 s 8 are each amended to read
2 as follows:

3 (1) The legislature recognizes the need for temporary short-term
4 relief for foster parents who care for children with emotional, mental,
5 or physical handicaps. For purposes of this section, respite care
6 means appropriate, temporary, short-term care for these foster children
7 placed with licensed foster parents. The purpose of this care is to
8 give the foster parents temporary relief from the stresses associated
9 with the care of these foster children.

10 (2) The legislature recognizes the need for respite care under
11 subsection (1) of this section for foster parents who care for children
12 in foster care placements longer than ninety days.

13 (3) The department shall design a program of respite care that will
14 minimize disruptions to the child and will serve foster parents within
15 these priorities, based on input from foster parents, foster parent
16 associations, and reliable research if available. The respite care
17 program shall provide that foster parents who care for children in
18 foster care longer than ninety days will be eligible for at least three
19 days of respite care per month per foster family. The respite care
20 program shall make payments directly to respite care providers on
21 behalf of the foster parents.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 74.13 RCW,
23 to be codified after RCW 74.13.325, to read as follows:

24 The legislature recognizes that children and youth entering foster
25 care have more complex needs than in the past. New service models are
26 needed to address these needs. The department is instructed to explore
27 proven and effective professional foster care projects nationwide and
28 to adopt such models to meet the needs and capacity of the state foster
29 care system. The professional foster care models should focus on
30 increasing the recruitment and retention of quality foster care
31 settings, and, where appropriate, should focus on the hardest to serve
32 children in foster care.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** RCW 74.13.290, 74.14A.050, 74.13.320, and
34 74.13.325 are each recodified as sections in chapter 74.13 RCW. These
35 recodified sections are to be placed after section 1 of this act.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** RCW 74.14B.020, 74.13.250, 74.13.310,
2 74.13.260, 74.13.280, 74.13.285, 74.13.300, 74.13.330, 74.13.270,
3 74.13.315, 74.13.335, 74.13.340, and 74.14B.080 are each recodified as
4 sections in chapter 74.13 RCW. These recodified sections are to be
5 placed after section 5 of this act.

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